Report of the State Autonomy Committee

380. SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Jammu and Kashmir forwarded the report of the State Autonomy Committee to the Central Government for its consideration;

(b) if so, when the Central Government received it;

(c) whether there was any prior consultation by the State Government with him before this report was placed for consideration in the State Assembly; if so, what advice the Central Government gave to the State Government; and

(d) what are the reasons for which Government have rejected the resolution passed by the State Assembly endorsing the report of the State Autonomy Committee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CH. VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) and (b) The Report of J&K State Autonomy Committee was received from the State Government of Jammu & Kashmir by the Centre in the last week o November 1999. As it was not clear as to whether the State Government had considered the Report, they were requested to apprise the Centre about their views/comments on the various recommendations. The State Government thereafte considered the Report of SAC and endorsed the recommendations and appri sed the Centre about the saine in the third week of January 2000.

(c) No Sir.

(d) The Government is committed to continuing its endeavour to evolve a broad consensus on the implementation of steps for wide-ranging devolution of powers to the States that leads to efficiency in administration, acceleration in development and the fulle st realisation of the creative potential of all sections of our people. The Govern.nent is also of the firm conviction that national integration and devolution of powers to States must go together. In this context, the Union Government have not accepted the resolution passed by J&K Assembly as its acceptance would set the clock back and reverse the natural process of harmonising the aspirations of the people of J&K with the rest of the nation and would also reverse the application of constitutional provisions to the State of J&K, which may not only adversely affect the interests of the people of the State but would also be tantamount to removal of some of the essential safeguards enshrined in our Constitution.